

**BAT SURVEY &
SITE RISK ASSESSMENT
FOR BUILDINGS AT 51 SUNDERLAND ROAD
CLEADON**

Veronica Howard, BSc (Hons), PhD, MCIEEM
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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This survey and report were commissioned by Keith Butler Architects on behalf of the owners of the property in September 2014. The aim of the study was to confirm the possible presence of a bat roost in two small buildings that previously served as a summer house and garage in the grounds of 51, Sunderland Road, Cleadon. The buildings are to be demolished and new house built on the site.
- 1.2 The buildings are presently used for storage and are in a good state of repair.

Site description (See Photos)

- 1.3 **Building 1** is a single storey summer house with rendered and painted walls and a pitched pantile roof. The whole building is in a good state of repair. There are no cracks or crevices in the walls, at the wall tops or around the window or door frames and no gaps could be seen under the pantiles.



Front elevation



Side elevation

- 1.5 **Building 2** is a single storey garage with rendered and painted walls and a slate roof. It is in a very good state or repair with no crevices in the walls or gaps under the slates.



Garage

Surrounding Habitat

- 1.6 The buildings are located in the grounds of 51 Sunderland Road where the main building is a large detached bungalow.
- 1.7 There are a number of trees and shrubs in the surrounding garden and in the gardens of neighbouring properties.
- 1.8 The property is located close to a busy road to the west with further housing to the north and east. There is a playing field to the south of the property.

2. METHODOLOGY

Methods

- 2.1.1 Because of the state of repair of the buildings and the lack of suitable bat roost sites only a daylight survey and risk assessment were deemed necessary in this instance.
- 2.1.2 The daylight survey involved checking the exteriors of the buildings for signs of bats, i.e. bat droppings and urine stains on the exterior walls, on window sills and on the ground.
- 2.1.3 Persistent urine stains provide a good indication that there is an access point to a roost somewhere above where the stains are found and can be a useful indication that a site is used. Bat droppings are unlikely to persist over the winter period unless the exterior wall is very well sheltered, and are far less likely to be found during winter surveys on exteriors of buildings. Where the interior of a building is dry, or in a watertight loft space bat droppings and/or insect remains persist indicating that a site is used in other seasons of the year.
- 2.1.4 There were no cracks and crevices around the window frames and door frames or in the exterior walls that required checking with a torch or endoscope.
- 2.1.5 **Timing**
The site visit and assessment were carried out on 26th September at the end of the bat breeding season but at a time when bats were active.

Personnel

- 2.1.6 The assessment was carried out by an ecological consultant who has worked extensively on bat conservation in North-east England for the past 25 years.

2.2 THE LAW RELATING TO PROTECTED SPECIES

BATS

- 2.2.1 All bats in Britain are protected by law. Under the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act and the Conservation (Natural Habitats) Regulation 1994, (Directive 92/43/EEC) it is illegal to:-

- * catch, injure, kill or sell any bat
- * damage, destroy or obstruct bat roosts (even when bats are not present)
- * disturb bats while they are roosting, for example by entering known roosts or hibernation sites.

A breeding site or resting site of any bat is known as a bat roost. A bat roost is any structure as bat use for shelter or protection. It is an offence to damage or destroy a bat roost at any time of year.

2.2.2 The following activities are those most likely to cause disturbance to bat roosts:-

- * Demolition of buildings
- * Restoration, building conversion or remedial work including re-roofing repointing of stonework.
- * Timber treatment.
- * Tree felling or extensive tree surgery.

Bats are most at risk from disturbance during the breeding season late May through to late September, after this the nursery roosts disperse. They are also vulnerable during the hibernation period; roughly late November to late March, as they are torpid and unable to move quickly from their hibernation roosts.

2.2.3 **Natural England** must always be consulted if any building work, including demolition, is to be undertaken which may cause disturbance to bats or their roost.

2.2.4 Any development which is likely to result in disturbance of a European protected species, or damage to its habitat usually requires a licence from Natural England.
‘Development’ is interpreted broadly to include projects involving demolition of buildings, rebuilding, structural alterations and additions to buildings.

2.3 RESULTS OF SITE ASSESSMENT

2.3.1 No signs of bat use were found on any of the exterior walls or on the ground around the buildings. (The interiors are in regular use so are unsuitable for bat use)

2.3.2 No potential roost sites were found in any of the exterior walls of either building.

2.3.3 There is good bat feeding habitat in the area closed to the buildings and a number of other properties that could provide potential bat roost sites. The roadside trees and trees in the grounds of the properties along Sunderland Road provide foraging habitat.

2.3.4 Durham bat group records for the urban areas of Sunderland and South Shields are dominated by common pipistrelle roosts and sightings. There is little evidence of other bat species in the area.

2.4 SITE EVALUATION

- 2.4.1 The buildings are considered unlikely bat roost or hibernation sites because of the lack of potential roosts in the exterior walls or at the wall tops and there is no evidence of use. The interiors were assessed as unsuitable because of the lack of potential access points and the high level of disturbance.
- 2.4.2 There are other properties close by that could provide potential bat roost sites.
- 2.4.3 There is potential bat feeding habitat in the general area but the high level of traffic nearby and therefore air pollution may impact on the flying insect fauna.
- 2.4.4 The area of garden surrounding the two buildings is largely hard standing and patio and has a very limited ecological value. The trees that overhang the garden from the neighbouring property do not have rot holes or similar that could support a bat roost site.

3 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 3.1 There is low risk to any bat species due to the demolition of the buildings because of the lack of potential roost sites in the exterior walls and the unsuitability of the interiors. As the buildings are unheated it is very unlikely they would be used as maternity roost sites even if suitable roost sites were present. There are no deep crevices or similar that could be used by hibernating bats.
- 3.2 There is always a very small possibility of a bat/bats being found during any building work or demolition work on any building of any construction. In line with good conservation practice, precautions need to be put in place working on the assumption that a bat(s) could be present.
- 3.3 Since no bat roost has been identified in the buildings it is considered that a license from Natural England will not be needed in this instance.
- 3.4 The removal of a few branches from overhanging trees and of a small number of shrubs will have no significant impact on bat feeding habitat in the area as there are trees on the roadside and in the grounds of many of the properties on Sunderland Road.

4. MITIGATION

Maintenance of Conservation Status

- 4.1 Given it is known that bats occur in the general area, the following mitigating steps will be taken to minimise any possible impacts:-

a) The contractors will be made aware of the need to proceed with caution and to check for the presence of bats. They will be requested to follow a method statement, and should there be any difficulty complying with this method statement they will contact the consultant for further advice.

b) All the existing door and window frames will be removed with care. If any gaps are found around the frames then these will be checked by illuminating with a torch to ensure no bat is present before the frame is removed.

c) All roofing materials will be removed with care before demolishing the buildings. Particular care will be taken when removing pantiles and slates.

d) The shells of the buildings will be allowed to stand overnight before the walls are taken down.

e) In the unlikely event of a bat or bats been found during demolition work and accidentally disturbed, work will cease and the consultant will be contacted for advice (Tel 0191 3773697). If it is necessary to remove a bat to prevent it being harmed, then it will be handled with care and gloves will be worn. It will be transferred to a box with ventilation and placed in a quiet place until it can be released at dusk or removed to another undisturbed part of the building where it can be placed out of the view of predators.

f) In the event of the consultant not being available Natural England will be contacted for advice. All contact numbers will be left with the owners and the contractors.

g) Any timber in the roof area of the new house will only have been treated with 'bat friendly' chemicals.

h) Any overhanging branches from the trees in the neighbouring property to the east should be removed with care.

4.2. A method statement has been appended to this report that is to be issued to the contractors carrying out the work.

5. SUMMARY

- 5.1 The aim of the study was to confirm the possible presence of a bat roost in two small buildings that previously served as a summer house and garage in the grounds of 51, Sunderland Road, Cleadon. The buildings are to be demolished and new house built on the site. The buildings are presently used for storage and are in a good state of repair.
- 5.2 A daylight survey and risk assessment was carried out in September 2014, to establish the potential for bats to use the buildings.
- 5.3 No signs of bats were found and no potential roost sites were found in exterior walls or at the wall tops.
- 5.4 There is good bat feeding habitat in the area over local gardens and along the roadside trees. The removal of a few branches from overhanging trees and a small number of shrubs from the garden of No.51 will have no significant impact on bat feeding habitat in the area as there are trees on the roadside and in the grounds of many of the properties on Sunderland Road.
- 5.5 The buildings are considered unlikely bat roost or hibernation sites because of the lack of potential roosts in the exterior walls or at the wall tops and there is no evidence of use. The interiors were assessed as unsuitable because of the lack of potential access points and the high level of disturbance. There are other properties close by that could provide potential bat roost sites.
- 5.6 There is low risk to any bat species due to the demolition of the buildings because of the lack of potential roost sites in the exterior walls and the unsuitability of the interiors. As the buildings are unheated it is very unlikely they would be used as maternity roost sites even if suitable roost sites were present. There are no deep crevices or similar that could be used by hibernating bats. Since no bat roost has been identified in the property it is considered that a license from Natural England will not be needed in this instance.
- 5.7 In line with good conservation practice mitigation will be put in place to protect the conservation status of bats in the area. This will include careful working practices, careful removal of roofing materials, window frames etc, before demolition of the walls and allowing the shells of the buildings to stand overnight before the walls are taken down. A method statement will be given to the contractors carrying out the work to ensure no accidental harm to bats.

METHOD STATEMENT – 51 SUNDERLAND ROAD, CLEADON

1. Objective - To maintain and protect the populations of bats in the Cleadon area.

2. Though the buildings have been assessed as unlikely to support a bat roost, it is known that bats occur in the general area and it is still possible to discover a bat during demolition work.

A bat can be hidden away in cracks, in rubble fill within a wall, in gaps in the mortar around windows or under roofing materials and can be difficult to see. Therefore great care is needed when working on any building when there are bats in the area.

It is the responsibility of the contractor to follow the guidelines set out below in Section 4 to ensure that no bats are harmed.

3. All bats in Britain are protected by law. Under the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act and the Conservation (Natural Habitats) Regulation 1994, (Directive 92/43/EEC) it is illegal to:-

- * catch, injure, kill or sell any bat
- * damage, destroy or obstruct bat roosts (even when bats are not present)
- * disturb bats while they are roosting, for example by entering known roosts or hibernation sites.

A breeding site or resting site of any bat is known as a bat roost. A bat roost is any structure as bat use for shelter or protection. It is an offence to damage or destroy a bat roost at any time of year.

The following activities are those most likely to cause disturbance to bat roosts:-

- * Demolition of buildings
- * Restoration, building conversion or remedial work including re-roofing, repointing of stonework.
- * Timber treatment.

4. The following guidelines must be followed when working on the buildings:-

a) All the existing door and window frames should be removed with care. If any gaps are found around the frames then these should be checked by illuminating with a torch to ensure no bat is present before the frame is removed.

b) All roofing materials should be removed with care before demolishing the buildings. Particular care should be taken when removing pantiles and slates.

c) The shells of the buildings should be allowed to stand overnight before the walls are taken down.

d) In the unlikely event of a bat or bats been found during demolition work and accidentally disturbed, work must cease and the consultant should be contacted for advice (Tel 0191 3773697). If it is necessary to remove a bat to prevent it being harmed, then it must be handled with care and gloves should

be worn. It should be transferred to a box with ventilation and placed in a quiet place until it can be released at dusk.

e) In the event of the consultant not being available Natural England should be contacted for advice. All contact numbers should be left with the owners and the contractors.

f) Any timber in the roof area of the new house should only have been treated with 'bat friendly' chemicals.